

A BRIEF, PITHY DISCOURSE

Upon 1 *Corinthians* 14. 40.

Let all things be done decently and in Order.

Tending to search out the Truth in this Question:

*Whether it be Lawfull for Church-Governours to
Command and Impose indifferent decent things (not
absolutely necessary) in the Administration of Gods
worship ?*

Written some years past by a Judicious Di-
vine, and Seasonable for our present Times.

Prim. 1648. & Author of this book

*Numb. 15. 39. That yee may look upon it, and remember all
the Commandements of the Lord, and do them; and that yee
seek not after your own heart, and your own eyes, after
which yee use to go a Whoring.*

Pr. 1628

Gregorius Magnus Pastoralium, lib. 3. cap. 5.

*Aliter admonendi sunt subditi; & aliter Prelati illi ne sub-
jectio Contrarij, illi ne locus superior extollat: illi ut humi-
liter subjaceant; illi quoque ut temperantur præstet.*

Bishop Pilkingtons Exposition on the Prophet

Abdiel, pag. ult.

*It is not meet that God should be King, and the Pope and Pre-
lates to make Lawes for him to rule by: But God Rules by
his own Lawes.*

LONDON, Printed in the Year, 1661.

B. 16. 23. Line





* **A Brief, Pithy Discourse upon**
I Corinthians 14. 40.

*Let all things be done decently and
in Order.*

* Which will
serve for an
answer to Dr.
Alexander
Read Parson
of Epsfield in
Essex, his
idle Visitation
Sermon,
(printed,
1636.) upon
this very
Text.

Throughout
which he
makes his own
private Fanta-
sies the sole
rule of Decen-
cy, without
one word of
Scripture to
back them.

ALL (I conceive) that this place, I Corinthians 14.
40. *Let all things be done decently and in order,* holdeth
forth touching the point of Decency and Order,
may be summed up in these particulars.

First, That the whole Church and every Member
thereof are to perform all the duties of Gods worship in
a decent and orderly manner.

Secondly, What the Church and Members thereof
are to do in this kind; That the Church-Governours
may and ought to see it done.

Thirdly, That it being the duty of Church-Gover-
nours to see that all things in the Congregation be done de-
cently and orderly; It is therefore their part in eminent
measure to be able to discern and judge what is decent and
undecent, what is orderly and disorderly.

Now, when I say, it is their part, I mean, it is their duty;
Their place and authority requireth it, not that they al-
wayes have a power & Spirit, of discerning to judge aright
in this Case; For, it seemeth, the High-Priest with the
rest of his Brethren and Prophets, yea and David himself,
all of them thought it decent to bring back the Ark of the

* Gal. 6. 16.
2 Pet. 1. 16.
19. 11ay. 8. 20.
Luke 16. 29.

* 2 Cor. 4. 2.
When Peter
and Paul com-
manded us to
obey our Su-
periors, they
commanded
to obey the
Bishops in the
Doctrine of
Christ, not in
their own.
Tyndals An-
swer to Mr.
Mores first
Book, p. 286.

Lord upon a New Cart, which afterward *David* himself saw and confessed it, was not done after due order, 1 Chron. 15. 13. From whence it appeareth (since they also are subject to errours in this kind) that it will not be safe for them to judge and declare the decency of things by no better a rule than their own wisdom, judgement and pleasure; But even they also, as well as the people, must be guided by such rules as the Holy Ghost directeth us unto in this Case, which are the holy and infallible * Scriptures, and with Scripture, Nature and Civil-Customes; Yea and I willingly also admit the lawfull Custom of the Church or Congregation in which a man liveth: For to judge of decency by all these Rules we have warrant in Scripture, as 1 Cor. 14. 33, 34. 1 Cor. 11. 14 & 16.

And indeed, they who are to approve themselves in all their proceedings, (as * Paul did) and as all Church-Masters ought to do, to every Mans conscience in the sight of God, ought to be faithfully guided by these patterns.

It is not fit for them (I say) to give for the ground of their proceedings, their own wisdom and pleasure, but it behooves them to justify their doings therein from such rules, as every good Conscience may see approveable, 2 Cor. 1. 12. 13. 14. 2.

Fourthly and lastly, this place in hand holdeth forth also farther this truth, that whatsoever thing the Church seeth by those former rules to be indifferent and decent, or which Church-Governors shall by these rules declare so to be, those things may and ought lawfully to be done.

For farther clearing whereof, and the better describing of the power of Church-Governours in these matters; It may be observed, that of decent things lawfull to be done in Gods Church, some are; 1. Indifferent and decent only; As to preach in a Gown or a Cloak, whereof the one is no more necessary or expedient than the other. But now they are become Laudable Ceremonies, whereas before they were but Ceremonies alone. Now are they become necessary Rites, godly Institutions, seemly Ordinances, when as a-fore

fore they had no such name, and be that disobeyeth them shall not only be judged a Schismatick, or Felon, but also condemned as a Traytor against the King, as John Bale Bp. of Offory writes in his Image of both Churches, on Apoc. 13. f. 108.

2. *Decent and Expedient*; As to abide in single life, or to enter into marriage; of which though marriage in time of persecution be indifferent, yet single life is more expedient, to prevent the troubles of the Flesh, 1 Cor. 7. 26. &c.

3. *Necessary and decent*, either alwayes; As for a Woman to keep silence in the Church: Or at least *Hic & Nunc*, in some places and at some times, so as the neglect thereof would be uncomely and unexpedient, by light of

* 1 Cor. 14.
34. 15. 1 Tim.
2. 11. 12.

1. Nature.
2. Scripture.
3. Custome.

As, a * Woman to be unveiled in the Congregation in Eastern Countries; so, to * abstain from bloud, whilst the eating of it was offensive to the Jewes.

* 1 Cor. 11.
5. 10. 11.
* Acts 15. 29.

Now, for such things as are *necessary and decent*, Church-Governours have power to give order and commandement concerning them. As did the Synod at Jerusalem touching those things, which they called *Necessary*, to wit, Necessary during the time of the offence of the Jewes; which was necessary to be avoided, Acts 15. 28, 29. 1 Cor. 20. 32. Of such things as are *decent and expedient*, Church-Governours also have power to declare the Decency and Expediency of them, yea * and to advise and perswade the practise of them; but not to give an Order or Law to binde the people thereunto farther than themselves shall find it expedient and decent for themselves.

* 1 Cor. 7. 8.
9. 12, 13, 14.
25. 26. &c.
cap. 11. 4, 5.
13, 14, 15, 16.

* Thus in point of abiding in Single-life, in time of the Churches Distresse, the Apostle gives his advise and judgement:

A 3

1 Cor.

1 Cor. 7. 25, 40. Yea and perswaded to it, for *avoyding* trouble in the flesh, *Vers.* 26. and 28. but would not bind them to it, neither in point of Conscience nor of outward practise, as having no command for it from the Lord, *V.* 25. In which respect he calleth such a commandement (if he had given it) a *Snare, V.* 35.

And herein the power of the Church-Governours falleth short of the authoritie of Civill Majestrates, who may in *civill-matters* make binding Laws for any thing expedient, for publicke weale, which subjects are readily to submit unto, 1 Pet. 2. 13. Tit. 3. 1. Rom. 13. 1. 2. 5.

But * Church-Governours have not the like power in matters Ecclesiastical, to make binding Laws for any thing expedient in the Churches behoofe, unlesse Necessity be joyned with expediencie.

Against this it may be objected, *Paul* had power to command *Pbilemon* that which was convenient; *Pbil.* 8. Therefore he might make a Law commanding the Church some expedient decent things.

It follows not; For first, its one thing to give a Commandment for once, and that in a particular case, as here; another thing to make a Law to bind One alwayes to doe the like.

Secondly, it is one thing to command a particular person, in case only of a private wrong, who may owe himself to a Church-Governour, as *Pbilemon* did to *Paul*: Another thing to command, yea to give a standing command & binding Law to a whole Church, in Worship or Ceremonies, to whom he professeth himself only a *Servant* or *Minister*, 2 Cor. 4. 5. over whom he hath no authority, but only * *Stewardly* or *Economically*, to wit, when he speaks in his Lords or Masters name, not in his own. As the Steward in a family hath not power over his Masters Spouse, but when he speaks or shews his Masters command or directions, not his own.

But, of such things as are only *Indifferent* and *Decent*, I do not find in Scripture that ever Church Governours did lawfully advise and perswade them; Much lesse charge and command them. And that this place in hand, 1 Cor. 14. 40. doth

* See Dr. Barnes his Discourse, that Mens Contentions bind not the Conscience: p. 297. to 301.

Objection.

Answer.

* 1 Cor. 4. 1. 2.
2 Cor. 1. 14
Luke 12 42.
to 49. Tit. 1.
7. 1 Pet. 5. 3.

Note this.

doth not give them any such power (though it be much urged to this end) may appear from these reasons.

First, the place speaketh not of Indifferent Decent things, but of Necessary. Decent things only, the neglect wherof was undecent, and disorderly, by the light of Nature, Scripture Custom. As* for Men to wear long hair, women to be bare-headed, & *brayd their hair*, for women to speak in the Congregation, as also for men to speak many of them at once.

* 1 Cor. 11;
to 18 c. 14. 2
to 38. 1 Tim;
2. 9. 10. 1 Pet.
3. 3.

Secondly, the words of this place run not thus, Let all decent things be done; Or, let all things judged or declared by the Church Governours to be decent, be done; but thus, *Let all things*, (to wit, all Ecclesiastical matters; As all the Ordinances of God that are done in the Church, all the duties of Gods worship; Whether Praying, Prophesying, Psalms, Sacraments, or the like) be done decently & orderly, in orderly and decent manner.

But whether in that decent manner, which Church Governours do appoint, or in some other, that the Apostle limiteth not, but only requireth that all be done decently, which if it be done (in any decent manner, gesture, warranted by Scripture or Nature) his rule here prescribed is fully observed and followed.

3. Thirdly, the same may appear out of this place by this argument.

If this Text of the Apostle did give power and authority to Church Governours to command indifferent decent things, then he that should transgresse the commandment of the Church therein, should also transgresse the commandment of the Apostle: As, look what Order or Acts of Justice any civil Governour doth by vertue of the Commission of the King, He that violateth such Acts, or transgresseth such Orders, transgresseth also against the Commandment and Commission of the King.

But, it appeareth to be otherwise in this* case, as for instance.

If the Church Governours command a Minister to preach alwayes in a Gown (it being indifferent and decent so to do) he that shall now and then preach in a Cloak, transgresseth

See D. Barnes;
That mens
Constitutions
bind not the
Conscience, p.
197. to 300.

the

* see La Cerda his Commentary thereon.

Mar. 11. 15.
Lu. 18. 11.
2 Chron. 6. 13.
Lu. 22. 41.
Acts 3. 60. c.
9. 40. c. 20.
36. c. 21. 5.
2 Sam. 7. 18.
1 Chron. 17.
16. Ezr. 9. 4.
Ezech. 20. 1.
† Mar. 26. 7.
20. Mar. 14.
18. Lu. 22. 14.
27. 30. c. 24.
30. 31. Chrysostom, Theophilast, Beda, Beza, Walæus, Buxtorfius, and others on those Texts.

the command of the Church; But nor of the Apostle: For he that preacheth in a Cloak, preacheth also decently, or else whereto serveth Tertullians whole Book, * de Pallio.

Now, if so be it be done decently, then it is all that the rule of the Apostle requireth in this point.

The like may be said of praying, and of receiving the Lords Supper standing, kneeling or sitting, which are all three lawfull, indifferent and decent gestures, warranted by * Scripture Precepts, and Sitting (the gesture which doubtless Christ and his Apostles used when they instituted and received the Lords Supper) is a posture of Humility and Reverence as well as Kneeling, alwaies used at Suppers and Feasts among all Nations, as St. August. Enarratio in Psal. 126. & 138. & ad Simplicianum, l. 2. qu. 4. Gulielmus Stuckius, Antiqu. Convivialium, l. c. 33. l. 2. c. 34. and Walæus in Mat. c. 26. p. 294, 299 and in Mar. c. 11. v. 25. prove at large; Therefore to confine Christians to pray, or receive the Sacrament only kneeling, not standing or sitting, or else to censure or debar them from these Ordinances, must needs be without the verge of this Text, and to of Church Governours Jurisdiction, and a high encroachment upon their Christian Liberty.

But, because this point is of great consequence both for Church Governours and others to be truly informed in, give me leave to clear the same from some other arguments; To wit, That it is not in the power of Church Governours to command things meerly decent and indifferent in the worship of God by Order of Law. That so Prelates & Clergy men may be right well assured, God never gave unto them authority to make and establish so many Ceremonies and Traditions which be contrary to the liberty of the Gospel, and are blocks in Christen mens wayes, that they can neither know nor observe the same his Gospel in liberty of Conscience, nor attain a ready way to Heaven; as John Purvey affirmed in his Articles. Fox Acts and Monuments, p. 7. 11. 712.

First then, that which exceeds the bounds of Apostolical authority and straightneth the bounds of Christian Liberty

erty, is not in the power of any Church-Governour to command.

BUT to command indifferent decent things, by order of Law, exceedeth the bounds of Apostolical authority, and straightneth the bounds of Christian Liberty. *Ergo, &c.* The former of these, to witt, that to command indifferent decent things exceedeth the bounds of Apostolical authority, appeareth from the Commission granted to the Apostles, which was the largest Commission that ever Christ gave to any Church-Governours, * *Mat. 28. 20.* Where our Saviour giveth them Commission, *to teach all Nations to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them.*

Now, all things whatsoever he hath commanded them are Necessary, not indifferent for the people to observe: If therefore the Apostles over and above the Commandements of Christ, which are necessary, should teach the people to observe indifferent things also, which Christ hath not commanded, they shall exceed the bounds of their Commission, *1 Cor. 11. 23. c. 14. 37. 1 Cor. 7. 6. 10.*

It will be in vain to object, that our Saviour here speaketh only of matters of Doctrine and Faith, not of Government and Order: unlesse it could be proved, that our Saviour else where did enlarge this Commission, and gave them more unlimited power in matters of Government, Order or Indifferency: Which for ought I can see no man goes about to do, unless it be from this place of the *Corinth.* which hath been already cleared (as I hope) from any such meaning.

As for the second or latter part of the Assumption, that to command indifferent Decent things straightneth the bounds of Christian Liberty, is of it self evident. For, whereas (for Example,) a single man or woman are at Liberty to marry where they will, *1 Cor. 7. 39.* If the Apostle had bound them from marriage by any command of his, though they had received that Gift of Continency, yet he had then straightened and deprived them of their Liberty in that particular, *1 Tim. 4. 3. 4. Ccl. 2. 20. 21. 1 Cor. 7. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40.*

B

* This was the Argument of Joannes de Wesalia. Abbe: Ulpergensis, *Paraleipomena*, p. 419, to prove. *Quod Prælati non habent auctoritatem instituendi leges.*

It

Objection.

It is wont to be excepted againſt this, that Chriſtian Liberty ſtands not in the freedom of outward Actions, but only in the freedom of Conſcience.

As long therefore as there is no Divine neceſſity put upon the Conſcience to limit the lawfulness of the uſe of outward things, Chriſtian Liberty is preſerved, though the uſe and practice of outward things be limited.

Answer.

Where to I answer; 1. That the Apoſtle in this caſe leaveth the people of God at Liberty, not only in point of Conſcience for lawfulness to marry; But even in outward "Actions and Practice. *Let him do (ſaith he) what he will; " he ſtandeth not, let him be married, Verſ. 3. 6. 38.* As who ſhould ſay, the Conſcience being free from ſin in it, I will put no tye on the outward practice to reſtrain it.

2. That true Chriſtian Liberty, conſiſteth principally in the free Actual uſe of things lawful and indifferent in themſelves, and the Prohibition of their free Actual uſe to Chriſtians is expreſſly cenſured as *Anti-evangelical*, a badge of falſe Apoſtles, of Apoſtates from the faith, Hypocrites, men of ſeared Conſcience, *Anti-chriſtian Uſurpers*, 1 Tim. 4. 1. 3. 4 Now the Spirit ſpeaketh expreſſly, that in the later times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, giving heed to ſeducing Spirits, and Doctrines of devils; Speaking Lyes in Hypocriſy, having their Conſciences ſeared with an hot Iron, forbidding to Marry, and commanding to abſtain from meats which God hath Created to be received with Thankſgiving: For every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be reſuſed if it be received with Thankſgiving; For it is ſanctified by the word of God and Prayer, Col. 2. 20, 21. Wherefore if ye be dead with Chriſt from the Rudiments of the World; why as though living in this World are ye Subject to Ordinances? (or Canons) touch not, taſt not, handle not (no not Gods Ordinances, Sacraments, Creatures, but in ſuch Veſtiments, Geſtures, Poſtures) which all are to periſh with the uſing; which things have indeed a ſhew of Wiſdome in wiſdom, and Punſhing of the Body, 1 Cor. 4. 5, 6 Have we not power to Eat and to Drink? Have we not power to lead a-

bout

about a Sister, Wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the Brethren of the Lord and Cephas? compared with vers. 19. to 24. Rom. 14. 2, 3. For one believeth that he may Eat all things, another who is weak Eateth Herbs; Let not him that Eateth despise him that Eateth not; and let not him which Eateth not, judge him that Eateth; For God hath received him. **Who art thou that judgest another mans Servant?** To his own Master he standeth and falleth. But why dost thou judge thy Brother (or refrain him in the use of things indifferent) or why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? We shall all stand before the Judgement Seat of Christ? &c. Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge this rather that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his Brothers way, &c. to wit, by any restraints, Canons, Inhibitions, Censures, in or concerning things or ceremonies that are but indifferent, and not absolutely necessary by Gods prescription, or the nature of the things themselves. Therefore to prohibit any Ministers of the Gospel who are able and faithfull to preach the Word, or to excommunicate or cast them, or any other conscientious Christians out of the Church, or debar them from the Sacrament, because they cannot wear a Surplice, kneel at the Lords Table or Supper, or conform to every *Punctilio* in the Liturgy or Canons, and to deny them their Christian Liberty in the free use or forbearing of Ceremonies which are only decent and indifferent, is directly repugnant to Christian Liberty, the Gospel of Christ, and to *Acts* 4. 18, 19, 20. *Cb.* 5. 27, 28, 29, 41, 42. 1 *Thes.* 2. 14, 15, 16. 3 *John* 9. 10. *Rev.* 13. 16, 17. 1 *Cor.* 7. 8, 9. 25, 26, 27, 28, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 *Gal.* 5. 13. 14.

The second reason may be this; They who are not to *Argument 2.* judge or censure another in differences about circumstantial things or matters of Indifferency, they (surely) cannot make a binding Law, that all men shall be of one mind or of one practise in such things. But the former is true, from the rule of the Holy Ghost, binding all Christians, even the Apostle as well as others, *Rom.* 14. 3. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not, and let not him

that eateth not judge him that eateth, for God hath received him. *Col. 2. 16. &c. Ergo, &c.*

Objection.

But if it be said here, that this place speaketh only of private Christians, not of Church Governours.

Answer.

I answer; The place speaketh of Christians private and publick, seeing it reserveth and referreth the judgement of our Brethren in such like things, not to publick persons, but only to Christ, *Rom. 14. 4. 10.*

Argument 3.

The third Argument or reason is this: They who did accomodate themselves in the use of indifferent things according to the judgement and practise of all Christians wheresoever they came, they (surely) did not make Laws & bind Christians to accomodate themselves to their own judgement and practise in the use of things Indifferent: But the Apostles of Christ (and the † Christians too in the primitive Churches) did accomodate themselves in the use of Indifferent things according to the judgement and practise of all Christians wheresoever they came; as appeareth from the * Apostles Example *1 Cor. 9. 10, 21, 22, 23.* To the Jews (saith he) I became as a Jew &c. *Ergo, &c.*

† see Niceph.
Cal. Ecclef.
Hist. l. 1, 2. c.
33, 34, 35.
Socrates Ec-
cles. Hist. l. 5.
c. 21, 22.
l. 7. c. 28. 35.
* see Acts 11-
23, 24, 26, 27.
Eusebius Ec-
cles. Hist. l. 5.
c. 21, 10 25.
in the English
Translation.
Objection.

But, here it may be objected, though the Apostles rather chose to use their Liberty and their Unity than their authoritie in these indifferent things, wheresoever they came; Yet if they had pleased, they might have used their Apostolical authoritie in binding all Churches to their judgements and practise in such things.

Answer 1.

Hereunto I answer, first, that doubtless if they had received any such authority, they would in some place or other, and at one time or other have claimed it and practised it: For, a sword never used useth in the scabbard; And, *Frustra est potentia quæ nunquam venit in actum.* It is a true Axiom, and pertinent to what we speak of.

Secondly, I say, that the Apostle himself doth clear the point, when he confesseth he did thus accomodate himself even to the weakneses of Christians, *least he should abuse his authority in the Gospel, 1 Cor. 9. 18, 19, 20.* O that such Governors as plead their succession to the Apostles, and doe

Note this;

doe challenge in sundie passages of Government Apostolical authoritie, would be pleased to studie and emulate an Apostolical Spirit!

Let a fourth Argument be this, That if the Synod of Apostles, Presbyters and Brethren of Jerusalem did reach their authoritie no farther, than to lay upon the Disciples necks the yoke and burthen of Necessary things, and that only during the time while they continued Necessary; Then may not any succeeding Synod reach their authoritie to lay upon the Church Commandements and Canons of indifferent things; For, this Synod at Jerusalem was and ought to be the pattern and president of all Succeeding Synods; For, *Primum in unaquoque genere est mensura reliquorum*, * See 1 Cor. 7. 5, to 40. Col. 2. 19, 20, 20. 1 Tim 4. 3, 4. Mar. 7. 7, 8, 9. Math. 15. 9. Gal. 1. 10, 11, 12. c. 6. 12, 13.

And our Saviour teacheth us to refute aberrations from Primitive-patterns with this, *Math. 19. 8. Non sic fuit ab initio*. From the beginning it was not so: But the Synod at Jerusalem reached their authoritie no farther than to lay Commandements upon the Disciples only touching Necessary things, *Acts 15, 28* Necessary (I say) either in themselves (as abstaining from Fornication;) or at least in respect of present offence, as abstaining from blood, &c.

And let me conclude this Argument taken from the Apostle Paul his intercourse with the Apostle Peter, about a matter of this kind: If the Apostle Peter was to be blamed for compelling the Gentiles by his example to observe Indifferent things or Ceremonies of the Jewes; Then other Church-Governours will be as much blame-worthy for compelling Christians by Law and by grievous censures, to observe the Ceremonies now in question, though they were Indifferent. But, the Apostle tells us, *that Peter was to be blamed in this Case, Gala. 2. 11, 14. Ergo, &c.*

Now, if any except thereat (as some are wont to do in this case) and say, that Peter was therefore blamed, because the Ceremonies to which he compelled the Gentiles were not urged as things Indifferent, but as Necessary to Justification and Salvation. *Objection.*

Answer.

I answer, This is but a mere evasion, and will stand them in no stead; For, it is certain, *Peter* did not account them as necessary, he knew the contrary, nor did he so use them himself, nor so compel others to them; But, knowing his Liberty for him (a Jew) to use them among the *Jews*, he used them onely when the *Jews* came down from *Jerusalem*, out of a tender care to prevent their offence.

Object.

But, you will urge again, and say: The false Teachers didurge them as necessary.

Answer.

I answer; What then? So did the Christian *Jews* at *Jerusalem*, yea *Paul* himself used them there, *Acts* 21. 23, 24, 26, 27. notwithstanding the corrupt opinion of Worship and Necessity which they put upon them, as much as ever did the false Teachers in *Galatia*.

Objection.

Why then (will you say) did *Paul* blame that in *Peter*, which he practised himself?

Answer.

He had indeed blamed *Peter* for that which he practised himself, if he had therefore blamed him for practising such Ceremonies, because they were urged by others with a corrupt opinion of Necessity and worship.

Quere.

What was then the difference that made the practise of *Paul* lawfull in using the Ceremonies at *Jerusalem*, and the practise of *Peter* unlawfull in using the same Ceremonies among the Gentiles at *Antioch*.

Answer.

I answer; The difference was this: Though that corrupt opinion of the necessity of the Ceremonies prevailed alike in both places; yet the Ceremonies themselves had not the like warrant in both places. In *Jerusalem* they were known to have been the Commandements of God, and were not yet known to the Christian *Jews* to have been abrogated, and therefore at *Jerusalem* they had warrant from God to use them, to avoid the offence of the weak Jew there; But at *Antioch* and all other Churches of the Gentile: they were (at best) but things Indifferent, as having never been commanded of God there; Whence it was, that *Peter* saw his Liberty to forbear them there at his first coming.

What

What was then the Sin of Peter in resuming the practise *Q. uere.* of the Ceremonies there?

His Sin was double. First, the abuse of his authority *Answer.* in the Church, for that unawares by his Example he compelled the Gentiles to the use of such Ceremonies, as himself saw Liberty to forbear amongst them; And which having never been commanded by God to them, he had no power to impose on them. His other Sin was, the dissembling or concealing of his Christian Liberty which he should then (then) have stood upon, when he saw the false teachers urge these Ceremonies upon the Gentiles as well as upon the Jews, to the prejudice of their Christian Liberty.

When things that are indifferent are commanded to be done of necessity (as now all Popes, and Prelates Ceremonies are) then are not the same to be obeyed, because the same destroyeth our freedom in Christ.

The Sum of all this will lead us by the hand one step farther, namely; if it be a sin in Church-Governours to command (especially upon strict penalty) Indifferent decent things; It will be a sin also in Ministers, and in private Christians to subscribe *Ex animo*, and to yield obedience by Conformity to such command-, although the Ceremonies were as good (indeed) as they were pretended (which * I believe they are not) Indifferent-Decent-Things. For, doth not such voluntarily Subscription and Conforming to them build up our Church-Governours, yea and with them (that which is most to be taken to heart of us, our Sovereign civil Governours also in the confidence) that such Commandements are as well lawfully given by them, as received and obeyed, yea confirmed and allowed by us?

Now to build up or edifie a Brother to sin, is properly to offend a Brother; For the proper definition of an offence is, that which edifieth a Brother unto Sin, as the original word expresseth it, 1 Cor. 8. 10. and so to sin against a Brother, is to wound his Conscience; Yea, and as much as in us lyeth, to cause him to perish for whom Christ died; Which is no better then Spiritual Murther of his Soul.

Now,

* This was the judgement of the Author of them.

Now, if thus to edifie any Brother to sin be so heynous an offence, how much more heynous an offence is it, to edifie our Governours to the giving and urging of such Commandements, yea and to the sharp Centuring of all others, as refractory and factious persons, who choose rather to undergo the losse of the greatest Comforts they enjoy in this World, then to wound the Consciences either of themselves or of their Governours.

It is true, by forbearing obedience to those Commandements we offend the Spirits of our Governours, and make them to be (though causelessly) offended with us; But by yielding obedience to these things we should offend their Consciences in edifying them to sin, and provoke the Lord to be offended with them. Better they be offended with us, without fault, then through our fault God to be offended with them and us.

It is not for Christians; Muchlesse for Ministers, to redeem outward peace and Liberty at so dear a price as the hazzard of the blood of so many pretious Souls, especially of our Governours in highest place and Authority. This was the Authors Judgement, with whom our Martyr Mr. *Wil. Tyndall* concurs, in his Answer to Mr. *Moore*s first book, p. 285, 286. Our Prelates ought to be our Servants, as the Apostles were, to teach us Christs Doctrine, and not to Lord over us with their own. *Peter* called it tempting of the Holy Ghost, *Acts* 15 to lade the Heathen with ought but that which necessity and brotherly love requireth, and *Paul* rebuking the *Corinthians* and *Galatians* for their over much obedience, warneth all men to stand fast, and not to suffer themselves to be brought into bondage.

F I N I S.